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# 7 tips for placing small diameter implants from Dr. Gordon Christensen

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By [Dr. Gordon Christensen](#)

Clinical Tip 77: Small Diameter Implants (SDIs or “mini” implants) must be placed correctly for success

After eight years of placing implants under 3 mm in diameter and experiencing only a few failures, I have several tips for you to achieve optimum success with “minis”:

**Tip 1:** SDIs are most predictable and serve best in type 1 and type 3 bone (resorbed and dense anterior mandibular area and fine trabecular bone in the premolar and anterior maxillary area).

**Tip 2:** Type 2 bone is usually quite porous in the center. Wider body implants are more predictable than SDIs in those areas.

**Tip 3:** Don't place SDIs in type 4 bone (tuberosity area). The bone is too porous.

**Tip 4:** If the soft tissue over the site to receive SDIs is more than 2 mm thick, remove the excess soft tissue before or during implant placement. SDIs serve best when minimally extended coronally from the bone.

**Tip 5:** When considering SDIs for complete denture retention and stabilization, such as in the mandibular canine areas, use two SDIs in the general location of each canine area instead of one.

**Tip 6:** Keep SDIs as parallel to one another as possible. I suggest no more than 15 degrees from parallelism.

**Tip 7:** Place SDIs extending as equal in length from the soft tissue as possible.

Small diameter implants serve very predictably and well, especially for physically, financially, or anatomically compromised patients. But they must be placed adequately for optimum service.

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Dr. Christensen is a practicing prosthodontist in Provo, Utah, and dean of the Scottsdale Center for Dentistry. He is the founder and director of Practical Clinical Courses, an international continuing education organization initiated in 1981 for dental professionals. Dr. Christensen is a cofounder (with his wife, Rella) and senior consultant of CLINICIANS REPORT (formerly Clinical Research Associates), which since 1976 has conducted research in all areas of dentistry.

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